



Gecko CLaN Inc. (Catchment Landcare Network): Warrenbayne/Boho Land Protection Group, Molyullah/Tatong Tree and Land Protection Group, Goomalibee Landcare Group, Sheep Pen Creek Land Management Group, Swanpool Landcare Group, South Yarrawonga Landcare Group, Yarrawonga Urban Landcare Group, Dookie Land Management Group, Burramine/Tungamah Land Management Group, Granite Creeks Project, Balmattum/Sheans Creek Landcare Group, Burnt Creek Landcare Group, Creightons Creek Landcare Group, Goomal Valley Landcare Group, Longwood East Landcare Group, Strathbogie Tablelands Landcare Group, Nagambie Landcare Group, Warby Ranges Landcare Group, Benalla Indian Myna Action Group.

From the Chair

Hello fellow Landcarers,

What a great drop of rain we've been having. It's a long way from the dry winter and summer that led to workshops to assist farmers to manage their water supplies. I hope everyone takes these opportunities to plan for dryer times.

I'm very pleased to hear that State Government has confirmed funding for Landcare facilitators until June 2019. A copy of the letter confirming this is included for you all to read.

At the Gecko CLaN executive level, it has been great hearing about the range of projects being delivered by the Landcare Groups in our region. Landcare across our region is proudly delivered using a bottom-up approach. Ideas for projects are developed at a grass-roots level and are implemented by Landcare groups. Support for these ideas and projects is available from our Landcare Project Officer Kerri Robson.

This model of delivery is not an easy fit for governments of all levels that prefer a top-down approach to landcare works. I encourage all of our member Landcare groups to continue developing ideas and projects that are important to you. The Gecko CLaN will support you.

I would also encourage newer members to Landcare to consider participating on the Gecko Executive. We meet every two months to work out how best to support our member groups.



The Gecko CLaN best supports your group when we have a range of members contributing to the Executive. If you are interested in being on the Executive please give Kerri Robson a call on 0418 140 710

This newsletter will highlight some of the great work being delivered across our region and provide an update on the field days we have recently hosted.

One of these you will read about is the Developing Community Led Programs in Rabbit Control hosted by the Granite Creek Project. It was great to see nearly 40 people from across the state come along to hear about the success of the Granite Creeks Project in reducing rabbit numbers.

As we look forward to warmer weather I wish you all a safe and productive winter,

Doug James

Chair Gecko CLaN Executive

Remember to check out our Website

Check out the Gecko CLaN website at www.geckoclan.com.au to keep up to date on Landcare in the Gecko CLaN

Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program Funded until June 2019

Dear primary contacts from groups/networks for the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program and Landcare facilitators

I am writing to re-confirm that the 68 Landcare facilitator positions funded through the Victorian Landcare Facilitator Program (VLFP) will continue until June 2019. In March 2015, the former Minister announced a continuation of the 68 Landcare facilitator positions until 2019 - go to this link to the Minister's announcement <http://www.premier.vic.gov.au/funding-to-help-locals-preserve-their-environment/>

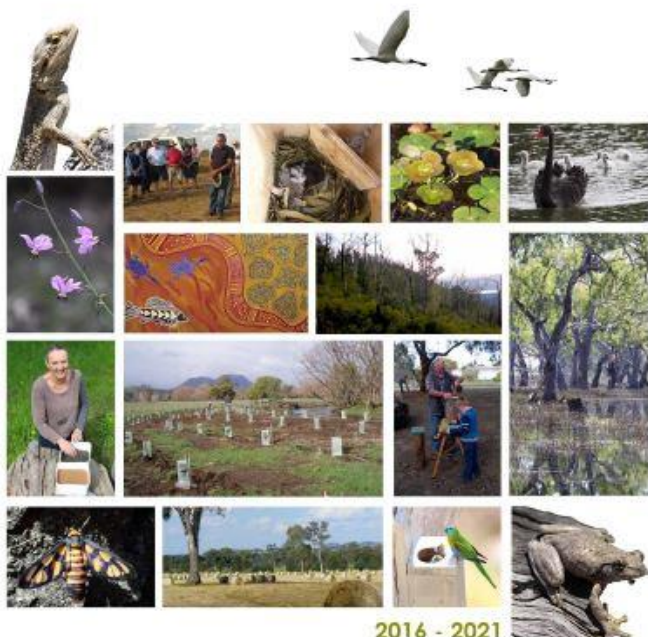
I am aware that some of you have made enquiries about the on-going status of the VLFP, in particular the contracts and funding. In terms of next steps, we currently working through the mechanics of finalising the new funding agreements for the 68 VLFP-funded Landcare facilitator positions and will send out soon the agreements to the recipient groups/networks.

regards
John Robinson

Victorian Landcare Program | Environment and Community Programs | Biodiversity Division
Environment and Climate Change | Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning

Biodiversity Strategy Open for Comment

Goulburn Broken Catchment
Draft Biodiversity Strategy



The Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority is seeking feedback on the Biodiversity Strategy.

A copy of the document can be seen [here](#)

This update of the Biodiversity Strategy:

- builds on three previous versions prepared over the past 20 years;
- factors in reviews of previous strategies, current regional drivers of change, and state and national government policies and strategies;
- provides a more explicit framework for applying resilience thinking (including a systems approach and adaptive management);
- identifies priorities across various scales; and
- identifies initiatives under 5-year strategic directions for achieving a 15-year vision.

Please direct queries / forward feedback to Mel Haddow at melh@gbcma.vic.gov.au or 5764 7508.

Upcoming Events

Wednesday 7th September 2016

Gecko CLaN Network Meeting

**Guest Speaker:
Geoff Brennan of the Goulburn
Broken CMA**



All Landcare Members within the Gecko CLaN region are welcome.

The meeting is a great opportunity to hear what other Landcare groups and members are working on. Hear about upcoming projects, new technologies being trialled and how to attract new members.

Geoff Brennan will be speaking about the Rivers 2040 Project.

To express your interest or find out more information contact Kerri Robson on 0418 140 710 or landcare2@iinet.net.au

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday 2nd November, 2016

Stipa Native Grasses Association presents

Gabe Brown



Presenting on combining perennial native grasslands, multi-species cover cropping and planned grazing.

To find out more about this innovative farming techniques save the date for this upcoming field day.

Benalla Event

For registration contact Graeme Hand
graeme.hand@bigpond.com or 0418532130



If you missed out on registering for this course, contact Ashley Rogers to register for future events like this one.

Ph. 03 5764 7507.

http://www.gbcma.vic.gov.au/news_events

Projects and Field Days from across the network

Creightons Creek-Gooram Blackberry Action Group



Creightons Creek and Gooram are located roughly south of Euroa in the valleys of Creightons Creek and Castle Creek.

At a meeting in July 15, 2015 four volunteers formed an initial committee to plan and organize a meeting with the Victorian Blackberry Taskforce (vbt). Now a committee of six, three from each valley, the official BAG journey began in September 2015 when Barton Roberts and Lyn Coulston from vbt attended a meeting in Creightons Creek.

The Project Officer Cam Paterson, was appointed in early January 2016, since then contact has been made with landowners in those parts of Creightons Creek and Gooram considered to have the most serious blackberry infestations. However at this late stage in the season most time and effort has been concentrated on preparation for next season. This involves collecting contact details, circulating control advice and preparing documents relating to monitoring and subsidies.

Photo notes: Top sprayed 4/2, photo taken 9/2. Bottom photo taken 23/4

Creightons Creek Landcare have offered a subsidy for herbicide and/or contractor, followed by a similar subsidy from Granite Creeks. Also a funding application has been prepared for a grant from the Victorian Landcare Grants Program. The outcomes of this grant is not yet known.

The contact details for these Landcare Groups are:

Creightons Creek Landcare Group – Barry Noye ph.57903223

Gooram Valley Landcare Group – Neil Devanny E-mail: neil.n.devanny@gmail.com

Or contact Landcare Facilitator Kerri Robson on Mob: 0418 140 710 landcare2@iinet.net.au

Contact details for your local Landcare Group

Where available the contact details for your local Landcare Group can be found at

<http://www.geckoclan.com.au/groups/>

If you can't find it here contact Kerri Robson on Mob: 0418 140 710 landcare2@iinet.net.au

Sustainable Futures in Agriculture Schools Project

The primary school component of the 'Sustainable Futures in Ag' Project – funded and supported by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority – is underway with meetings having taken place with Glenrowan Primary School and Benalla Avon Street School regarding the implementation of indigenous bush tucker gardens at the schools. Both schools already have chook pens and vegetable gardens in place as well as cooking classes which utilise vegetables grown in the schools' kitchen gardens. At Avon St School, these cooking classes currently tie in with the school's Indonesian program.

The 'Sustainable Futures in Ag' Project will utilise these existing resources and the passion of teachers and parents to expand on the number of edible plants – particularly indigenous plants – grown at the schools, as well as to improve existing infrastructure. School children will also be engaged during the project to promote their understanding of soil and its symbiotic relationship with plants.

Exciting ideas for the schools' gardens include the installation of a greenhouse, more student-friendly raised beds and the installation of plaques alongside the plants with relevant indigenous words to educate students about local indigenous culture.

To find out more about this project or to talk about how your school could participate, contact Kerri Robson on Mob: 0418 140 710 landcare2@iinet.net.au

Final Multi-Species Pasture Cropping Field Day

Colin Seis was back in the region following up on Pasture Cropping trial sites. This innovative farming system continues to challenge the orthodoxy of conventional farming and demonstrates that food and fibre production can occur in conjunction with land restoration.



The final field day and paddock walk was hosted by the Sheep Pen Creek Land Management Group in Violet Town on 22 June 2016.

Brad Costin (on left in photo) from the DEDJTR spoke about different soil types and soil structural decline. A number of great resources have been produced from this project and electronic copies are made available through the Gecko CLaN website. These include newsletters, online videos and three Pasture Cropping books.

For further information please follow the link below:

<http://www.geckoclan.com.au/project/pasture-cropping/>



Ag Secondary Students getting hands on experience

In June 32 Students from Benalla FCJ College participated in on-farm visits as part of the Gecko CLaN Sustainable Futures In Agriculture Project. The students heard from speakers such as Kylie McReadie and Dr Ian Holmes



from DEDJTR, Tom Abbotsmith (Tom's Paddock) and James Alcaniz from Rural Finance. Students also attended Jason Trompf's property and also heard from Hannah Marriott.

The project aims to create interest from young people in agricultural and environmental sectors with a focus on sustainable agricultural practices.

In an experience unlike any the students would receive in their regular classes the student got hear from successful farmers on principles of sustainable agriculture, stock health, shelterbelt planning, rural finance, scan sheep in the yards and even watch a lamb autopsy.



Presentations occurred both in the field and in the class room



Hands on - Sheep scanning with Hannah Marriott

For further information about this project or to find out how you could participate in projects such as this contact Kerri Robson on : 0418 140 710.

2016 Swanpool Environmental Film Festival – edited report

The SEFF is now an annual event and this year it was as popular as ever with 150 booking for the catered event and more phoning at the last moment to fill the remaining seats. As people entered film clips were screened with aerial footage of Winton Wetlands and the short film 'A Magic Place', showing Mokoan before the lake was built. Ron Litjens beautiful photographs of the Yea Wetlands were also set to music.

The film 'Polyfaces' followed which documents the methods and the history and the social life at Polyface Farm in Virginia, USA. It was produced by an Australian crew including the co-director Isaabella Doherty and her partner Andreas Øverdahl who came to Swanpool and answered questions following the screening. The questioning continued over afternoon tea.



Delusion'. Many of the audience gave her a standing ovation at its conclusion. We thank Flaxmoor Productions in the UK for making this available to us free of charge. It was an excellent film and asks the question not so much whether humans have caused a new geological epoch but what type of future will we shape for ourselves?

After dinner the final session commenced with some of Professor Michael Clarke's own team photos set to music. Mike is Head of Life Sciences at Latrobe University. He gave a very personable talk, starting with his own life growing up with nature and his own teenage explorations, especially of 'The Prom'. The talk included a degree of audience participation, identifying some 'common' bird and plant species. But are they so common today? His talk title was 'Ecological Literacy, ambivalence and inspiration' and explored our connections with wildlife around us. Unfortunately we're losing that connection and losing the species.

The final film for the evening was 'Tarkine in Motion' – 72 artists visited the pristine Tarkine region in Tasmania in the Easter of 2015. This film had breathtaking vision and haunting music. It sent a very strong message that we need to protect such remaining wilderness regions from the pressures of development. The film was provided to us without charge by the Bob Brown Foundation and we'll send them a donation to help them continue the fight.

The evening concluded with heartfelt thanks to our speakers, the film producers and our sponsors – GBCAM, the Gecko CLaN, Granite Creeks Landcare Network and a community grant from Benalla Rural City. Thanks were also extended to all the wonderful Swanpool volunteers.

It's difficult to summarise a whole day of information, contemplation and inspiration in just a few short words. There was also time for socialising and sharing the food provided by the Swanpool Catering Team. All we can really say is that if you missed out this year, please book early next year.

Ian Herbert
Event Organiser
on behalf of Swanpool Landcare
and Benalla Sustainable Future Group



Dr Kerry Higgs was the next speaker and she gave a stunning talk titled 'Collision Course: The Growth

Shelterbelts workshop



Resilient Sustainable Agriculture
Enhancing Farmer's Skills and Knowledge

The aim of the Resilient Sustainable Agriculture project is to provide farmers with training on the latest innovations in sustainable agriculture. Field days cover topics such as stress free animal handling, stock yard design,

the impact of extreme weather events on livestock and production, and assessing your farm water situation. The projects have been delivered in partnership with the Department of Economic Development and the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority. More details on each of these projects can be found on the Gecko CLaN website: <http://www.geckoclan.com.au/projects/>.

On 3 May 2016 the Swanpool Landcare Group hosted the event called:

Addressing the impact of extreme weather events on livestock and production

The workshop heard from DEDJTR District Veterinary Officer and Swanpool Landcare Group member Dr Ian Holmes on the health impacts of hot and cold weather on livestock. Kylie Macreadie from DEDJTR presented on shelterbelt design and the different types of shelter that may be suitable on your farm.

Information was also presented on the types of trees that are suitable for use as shelterbelts. Copies of these presentations are available on the Gecko CLaN website or at the link [here](#).



Nick O'Halloran, creator of [fence.farm](#) a fence mapping and cost calculation tool, demonstrated his tool to the attendees. The website allow users to customise the type of fence they want to use, calculate the materials required as well as cost the job.

The workshop finished with a visit to Peter and Christine Holmes' property in the Lima East valley, to inspect a number of existing shelterbelts.

Resources available from this project can be found on the Gecko CLaN website at:

www.geckoclan.com.au

Community led rabbit control programs

On a cold and wet June day the Granite Creeks Project hosted a one day workshop and field trip for attendees from across the state. 38 people attended the day to find out how to develop and run successful community led rabbit control program.



The workshop covered the following topics:

- The science of integrated rabbit control
- A case study of an effective and sustained program
- Methods of data collection and analysis
- Community engagement and networking
- The future release of RHDV K5 and how to maximise its impact

The successful program implemented over 20 years by the Granite Creek Project presents a model for other groups interested in community led pest eradication programs.

Field trips to rabbit control sites highlighted the challenges faced by this program with respect to the topography and the number of landholders involved.

For further information about this project please contact Neil Devanny on 0457 526 566 neil.n.devanny@gmail.com or Kerri Robson on 0418 140 710 landcare2@iinet.net.au



Granite Creeks Project

The Granite Creeks Project is a rabbit control project that encompasses six local Landcare groups working together within the Gecko CLaN. The Landcare group are:

- Balmattum/Sheans Creek Landcare Group
- Strathbogie Tablelands Landcare Group
- Gooram Valley Landcare Group
- Creighton Creek Landcare Group
- Longwood East Landcare Group
- Burnt Creek Landcare Group



The Granite Creeks Project was recently discussed on ABC's Landline Program and can be viewed here: <http://www.abc.net.au/landline/content/2016/s4453354.htm>

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contact:
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Further information on all of the
projects in this newsletter can be
found on our website at
<http://www.geckoclan.com.au/>

Project Officer Report

It has been a great start to the year for the Gecko CLaN with many groups attracting new members and hosting some great workshops and field days. This year we have again seen the delivery of great local events such as the Community led rabbit control field day, Swanpool Environmental Film Festival, field days around securing farm water supplies, multi-species pasture cropping and shelter belts for improved livestock health. It has also been great seeing the enthusiasm for the projects aimed at Primary and Secondary students in our region. The lamb autopsy experienced by Secondary Students won't be forgotten soon.



The other great event that the Gecko CLaN supported was the Farmer's Forum in Euroa where Merv Hughes was a very entertaining guest speaker.

In addition to the events held, our groups have been working on some great local projects such as fencing off waterways and cleaning up rubbish in community areas. We should all be proud of what Landcare is achieving across the region at a local level.

I hope to see you out next Gecko CLaN network meeting in Violet Town on 7 September 2016.

All the best,

Kerri